

**1 STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE
PLANTATIONS**

2

PROCEEDINGS AT:

3

School Committee Town of Cumberland

4

**5 IN RE: Cumberland Space Utilization Task Force
 Recommendation**

6

7 DATE: Thursday, March 20, 2008

TIME: 7:30 P.M.

**8 PLACE: Cumberland High School
 Auditorium**

9 2600 Mendon Road

Cumberland, RI

10

11 **SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBERS:**

12 **Donald J. Costa/Vice Chair**

Karen MacBeth/Clerk

13 **W. David Wagner**

Robert Thibodeau

14 **Lisa Beauleiu**

Earl T. Wood

15

16

APPEARANCES:

17

FOR THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE:

18

Joseph A. Rotella, Esquire

19

20 **ALSO PRESENT:**

21 **Donna A. Morelle, Ed.D./Superintendent**

Susan C. Carney, Ph.D./Assistant Superintendent

22

23

ALLIED COURT REPORTERS, INC.

24

115 PHENIX AVENUE

CRANSTON, RI 02920

25

401) 946-5500

2

1

(HEARING COMMENCED AT 7:30 P.M.)

2

MS. MACBETH: I believe Mr. Crowley is not

3

here yet, and Mr. Costa is not here yet, so we have four

4

members, so we're going to begin. Do you want me to

5

approve the agenda. Can I have a motion to approve the

6

agenda first.

7

MR. THIBODEAU: Yeah, I'd like to approve

8

the agenda, please.

9 MR. COSTA: Seconded.

10 MRS. MACBETH: All those in favor?

11 (AYE)

12 MRS. MACBETH: Opposed? Hearing none. I

13 need a motion to go into executive session, and it says

14 for discussion and/or action items referred to in G.L.

15 Rhode Island 42-46-5 negotiations/litigations exceptions

16 (2) (1) CTA/ICSE; (2) Central Administrators' Contracts;

17 (3) Non-Contractual Salaries and (4) Potential

18 litigations. Do I hear a motion?

19 MR. COSTA: Second.

20 MS. MACBETH: Opposed. Hearing none, we

21 will go into executive session.

22 MR. MCHUGH: Okay. Are we ready to begin?

23 May I have a motion to cite executive session minutes.

24 MR. WAGNER: So moved.

25 MR. THIBODEAU: Second.

3

1 MRS. MACBETH: All those in favor?

2 (AYE)

3 MRS. MACBETH: Opposed. Hearing none.

4 There were no votes taken in executive session to be

5 reported out. We are going to run tonight's meeting as

6 we ran the last meeting. We are going to pick up where

7 we left off, and that was with the Os for middle school,
8 and then when we're done going through the Os through
9 middle school all the way to the end, we will then open
10 it up to anybody again that may not have been at the last
11 meeting, and if you were not present at the last meeting,
12 what we did was we started with anybody that lived on a
13 street that began with an A, on the elementary level, and
14 they would speak, and we went to the Bs to the Cs, all
15 the way through. Mr. Rotella called each letter of the
16 alphabet, and people got up and spoke in that order.

17 Mr. Rotella, are you ready? Okay. Thank you.

18 Mr. Rotella is going to go through the protocol again.

19 MR. ROTELLA: At the last meeting, we went

20 through the protocol that had been used for the first
21 public hearing. The protocol again is printed on the
22 back of this, tonight's agenda. It is, we'll use the
23 same protocol. That basically says that everybody will
24 be given a five-minute ability to testify for or against
25 the task force's recommendation. I would ask that they

4

1 identify themselves by signing in at either podium that,
2 at the clipboard that's provided, their name, address,
3 and the street they have in question. We have, we had
4 completed the elementary street directory list. We were,
5 as of my record last time, we had completed the Os on

the

6 middle school list, and I will begin with the next letter
7 of the alphabet, P, and we will go from there. Everybody
8 will have an opportunity to present their side of the
9 story, or their testimony as we go along. So, therefore,
10 dealing with middle schools, does anybody have any
11 questions on any of the streets identified under P? I
12 hope, again, there should be lists, and there were lists
13 put out front of all of the street listings for the
14 middle schools.

15 MRS. MACBETH: Mr. Rotella, at this point,
16 I'm going to step aside from the podium, and I'm going
to
17 go down there because I do have something from a

18 community member that lives on 6 Oakledge Road. It is
an

19 O, which you previously had last time, but I would like
20 to discuss this at this point. Okay.

21 MR. ROTELLA: That's fine. I have already
22 given the stenographer a copy of that e-mail for the
23 record.

24 MRS. MACBETH: How do I turn this one on?

25 MR. ROTELLA: There should be a button right

5

1 on top.

2 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Push the button,

3 **maybe.**

4 **MS. CARNEY: You have to keep your hand on**
5 **the bottom for a minute.**

6 **MRS. MACBETH: Okay. Thank you. School**
7 **Committee Members, I'm down here tonight. We received**
an
8 **e-mail from Peter Langton who lives on 6 Oakledge Road,**
9 **and he is unable to come to tonight's meeting due to a**
10 **religious service that he needs to attend tonight, so he**
11 **has asked that his letter be read and then entered in,**
12 **and Mr. Rotella told me that we have already entered the**
13 **letter in to our stenographer, so I'm here to read this**
14 **letter now.**

15 **Dr. Morelle, Mr. Chairman, and School Committee**

16 **Members, I am disappointed that the second public**
forum

17 **to review input and feedback on the proposals from the**

18 **Space Utilization Committee has been scheduled for**
Holy

19 **Thursday. Unfortunately, I was out of town on business**

20 **for the first meeting. However, I would like to share**

21 **some observations and thoughts. When the discussion**
of

22 **space utilization and redistricting began, my wife and I**

23 **clearly were concerned about the impact on our child.**

24 **However, I recall conversations we had and our belief**

25 **that if the need was there, we certainly did not have a**

1 stronger argument than anyone else in town living along
2 the 295 corridor to not move our child. When it comes to
3 moving children and separating classmates and cohorts,
4 few take the issue lightly, and many focus on an
5 impassioned argument of justice and parity. Over the
6 last several weeks I have listened as my neighbors and
7 wife discussed the process and the seemingly lack of
8 information and data used to make the decision and
9 present an unbiased recommendation to the committee.

To

10 date, I am concerned about the process, and the result of
11 poor information or emotional justification that has led

12 to the current status of discussions.

13 In any decision-making model, the validity of the

14 result comes from the foundation of a strong process
and

15 purposeful analysis. Whether using six Sigma, total

16 quality management, or an educational decision-making

17 model, step one is a definition of the problem. All too

18 often, research has shown us, that groups tend to focus

19 on solutions and inevitably risk solving problems that do

20 not exist. While the solutions may be strong, and viable

21 options reviewed when not connected with the problem,
the

22 ultimate issue remains unsolved and the solution apt to

23 create additional problems. Our current process is an

24 apt demonstration of a flawed decision-making process.

**25 How has the problem been defined? What is the
definition**

7

1 of overcrowded. What data has been used to validate

2 personal opinion, and as you have heard from many

**3 community members, there is prudent and accessible
data**

4 from the Torrado report, and the US Department of

5 Education, and US Census Bureau as well as past school

**6 committee meeting minutes. Until we define
overcrowding**

7 and recognize the validity of reports used to support

8 building projects and additions over the last several
9 years, we will continue to focus and debate solutions
10 that are not aligned with the underlying problem
11 statement.

12 As a Cumberland public school graduate, and a
parent

13 of a third generation public school child, I am proud
14 from what I have gained through my education which my
15 child receives in his daily encounters with the dedicated
16 and professional staff of the Cumberland School
System.

17 At the very foundation of this process we have failed to
18 define an adequate problem worthy of resources being
19 spent to create solutions. The data shows a very

20 different story. Our middle schools are not
overcrowded.

21 Furthermore, research strongly indicates that separating
22 children is more likely to be detrimental than have a
23 positive impact on our educational success. Practical
24 reality often supercedes educational idealism. In this
25 instance, though, there's no reason to lean on the

8

1 practical solutions when no problem has been
2 substantiated.

3 I urge the members of the administration, and the
4 committee to place past discussions in context, and

focus

**5 on defining the problem and any question, and
questioning**

**6 the data behind cavalier assumption. We have many
things**

7 we could be doing together to approve and support the

8 agenda of better education for our children. Debating

**9 solutions for phantom problems certainly should not
make**

10 the list.

11 Thank you for your time and attention, Peter

12 Langton, CHS class of 1986. Thank you.

13 (APPLAUSE)

14 MR. ROTELLA: Are there any other, are there

15 any other people who want to speak on any of the P

16 streets within the district for middle school? Anyone

17 else? Anyone want to speak on the Q streets within the

18 district dealing with middle school, anyone? Anyone
want

19 to speak on the R streets dealing with middle school?

20 Anyone interested in speaking on the S streets with the

21 middle school?

22 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Thank you.

23 MR. ROTELLA: I think that's not on.

24 MRS. MACBETH: Hold the bottom in for a

25 couple of seconds.

1 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Hold it in.**

2 **MS. CARNEY: Down at the very bottom.**

3 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Hello.**

4 **MR. ROTELLA: You got it. If you could just**

5 **sign in on the sign-in sheet. I believe there is a pen.**

6 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Thank you, School**

7 **Committee, Task Force, and all involved for your hard**

8 **work to resolve this and other issues regarding our**

9 **schools --**

10 **THE REPORTER: Can you have him state his**

11 **name for the record?**

12 **MR. ROTELLA: Excuse me, can I ask you, for**

13 **the stenographer, to state your name.**

14 **MR. MURPHY: Yes. Paul Murphy.**

15 **MR. ROTELLA: Thank you, Paul.**

16 **MR. MURPHY: I'd like to submit my own**

17 **thoughts regarding the middle schools. I'd like to**

18 **recommend to the committee to implement the Plan C**
that

19 **was offered last week. There is educational benefit to**

20 **keeping the students from a particular elementary**
school

21 **together as they transition to middle school. If done,**

22 **this will reduce the North Cumberland Middle School**

23 **population naturally for those concerned about any**

24 **overcrowding that might be there. This would balance**
the

25 **populations of the two middle schools allowing for a**

10

1 **balancing of the curriculums, which is also an**
2 **educationally valid goal. It will relieve the anxiety**
3 **that fifth graders currently have when they don't know**
4 **what middle school they will attend, and if it'll be the**
5 **same one as their classmates. I think Plan C should be a**
6 **first step in any attempt of balancing the middle school**
7 **populations, if that is the goal. This is also a way of**
8 **drawing the line to identifying the streets, if you will,**
9 **to stabilize the boundaries of the middle schools, which**
10 **I think was the charge given to the task force. It will**

11 place those lines in the same boundaries being used for

12 the elementary schools, which seems natural. Thank
you.

13 MR. ROTELLA: Anyone else on the S streets,

14 S streets? Anyone on the T streets within the district

15 dealing with middle school, T streets? There is one

16 street under U, and that's Ursa Way, anyone want to
speak

17 on that issue? Anyone want to speak on the V streets, V

18 streets? Anyone want to speak on the W streets? If you

19 could sign in on the sign-in sheet and state your name
so

20 that the stenographer can keep that, and if you have a

21 statement, when you're done if you could pass that over

22 to her, she will make that as part of the record.

23 THE WITNESS: Sure.

24 MR. ROTELLA: Thank you.

25 MR. MENARD: My name is Bill Menard. I live

11

1 at 23 Wyoming, and I was also one of the members of the

2 Space Utilization Task Force Committee, and I have heard

3 a lot of people ask, and I also heard at one of the

4 school committee meetings this being asked why were
there

5 two people who voted against Plan B? What were their

6 reasons for that, and I wanted to take that opportunity

7 to address why I voted against Plan B.

8 THE REPORTER: I'm sorry, sir, I have to ask
9 you to speak up.

10 MR. ROTELLA: You can take, you can take
11 that microphone off there and get a better --

12 MR. MENARD: Sure. When we on the task
13 force had the discussion about what to do with the Bear
14 Hill neighborhood and what to do with these streets that
15 were north of 295 on Mendon Road, one of the things
that
16 came up was the recommendation of moving the Bear
Hill
17 neighborhood to McCourt Middle School to try and
balance
18 out the number of students between the two middle

19 schools, and the concern that I primarily had with that
20 was that I was going to end up splitting an elementary
21 school, another elementary school. It's going to split
22 Community and send some of those kids currently going
23 there, taking a handful of them each year and moving
them
24 into McCourt away from all the kids, the other students
25 that they had been with for five or six years at the

12

1 elementary level. And to me, I didn't think that that
2 made much sense. I didn't think that these students
3 would really benefit from losing all their friends that

4 they had been so close with over the years, and having to
5 try and make all new friends, kind of in a pool with all
6 these other kids that they don't really know, and when I
7 looked at, kind of, the numbers going forward at North
8 Cumberland Middle School, really what it looked like was
9 you were talking about increasing the numbers there by
10 nine kids next year, leaving Bear Hill as it is, we might
11 have nine more kids at North Cumberland Middle School
12 next year, so going from 690-699, and if you -- hello.

13 (TECHNICAL DIFFICULTIES WITH MICROPHONE)

14 MR. MENARD: So if you look going forward,
15 if you look at Plan A that we gave you guys, if you look
16 going forward, I'm sure you have seen this, next year

17 you're going to be reducing nine kids, potentially, nine

18 kids at North Cumberland Middle School, and then you
have

19 a problem every year going forward, a substantial

20 problem, that would be quite a few kids would be out of

21 North Cumberland Middle School because of the number
of

22 enrollment --

23 THE REPORTER: I'm sorry, sir, there would

24 be what?

25 MR. MENARD: There would be quite a few

1 kids, the numbers of enrollment are dropping each year,
2 so there would be quite a few kids decreasing each year
3 at North Cumberland Middle School, and I really didn't
4 see a point of changing these neighborhoods over to
solve
5 a problem of one year where you're going to have an
6 increase of nine kids. I would hope that they would be
7 able to make accommodations for those nine kids for one
8 year, rather than, kind of, making this neighborhood a
9 nightmare for all of these families, and the other thing
10 about Plan B that I have here that I'm looking at our
11 meeting minutes of February 6th of 2008, the
12 recommendation was going to be that Bear Hill
13 neighborhood was going to be a swing neighborhood,

that

14 you guys would use your discretion to decide what
streets

15 would move, would move from North Cumberland Middle

16 School to McCourt, as needed, if there were too many
kids

17 at North Cumberland on a yearly basis. That was my

18 understanding of what we were proposing to do, and
that

19 was another reason why I voted against it, because I

20 felt, excuse me, what that really did was it took the

21 problem that currently exists north of 295 and off of

22 Mendon Road where these kids don't know where they're

23 going on a year-to-year basis and now just put it into a

24 new neighborhood. So I don't know what your

Plan

25 interpretation of the recommendation was regarding

14

1 B, but that's how I had read it, and that's another
2 reason why I voted against it. I think actually those
3 are the primary reasons why I wasn't in favor of it. And
4 I hope it's okay that I took this opportunity to do this
5 since I really don't have any problems with the changes
6 proposed to Wyoming Drive, but I just wanted everybody
7 be in the know of what my objection was to it. And I
8 know some people wanted to hear why two members

voted

9 against the plan, I think it would also be good to hear
10 why some of the members support the plan, because I
11 really don't see any reason to support this plan.

12 Thanks.

13 (APPLAUSE)

14 MR. ROTELLA: Anyone else under Ws? Anyone
15 else under Ws for middle school?

16 DR. MORELLE: Mrs. MacBeth, have you
17 completed the middle school for this evening?

18 MR. COSTA: Yep, this is Ws, right?

19 DR. MORELLE: MR. Costa, are you taking the
20 meeting?

21 MRS. MACBETH: Are you going to take over

22 the meeting?

23 MR. COSTA: Go ahead.

24 MRS. MACBETH: We have finished going

25 through the alphabet for middle school, so at this point

15

1 what I'd like to do is, because many of you were not at

2 the last meeting, we will go back and we'll begin by

3 addressing anybody that's here on the elementary level,

4 given that we've been through the alphabet already, do

5 you want to just ask anybody here to speak on any of the

6 elementary? Okay, could you --

7 DR. MORELLE: May I also interject you
8 invited the principal of the Cumberland Preschool Center.
9 I just wanted to remind you, I didn't remind you before
10 the meeting started, also the two middle school
11 principals, and I wanted to make sure that before the
12 evening was completed that I submitted some testimony
in
13 response to a question that's been raised about what the
14 charge of the task force was, and the data that supports
15 some of the questions that have come up, at your
16 pleasure.

17 MRS. MACBETH: Thank you. Why don't we
18 begin on the elementary level. When you do come up, if
19 you could please state your name, and then also your

20 address, and sign in to the ledger.

21 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I'm signed in. My

22 name is Joe -- I don't know if this is on.

23 MR. ROTELLA: It's off, Joe, at the bottom.

24 MRS. MACBETH: Hold that in.

25 MS. CARNEY: If you hold it in for a minute.

16

1 MR. ROSSIGNOLI: Hello, it's not working.

2 My name is Joe Rossignoli. I live on Crestwood Court.

3 Just to give the public some background on this,
because

4 all the attention has been given really to the middle

5 schools. There is one street, three children out of 750
6 or 780 at Community that are being redistricted out of
7 Community. Two of them are my children, and one other
8 child lives on my street. There is listed on the
9 recommendation, actually, four streets. One is Carpenter
10 Lane, which does not exist. So there never was, and
11 never will be any addresses there. Another is Old
12 Diamond Hill Road, there is one address on Old Diamond
13 Hill Road, that's Horizon Manor. You won't be having
any
14 elementary school kids coming from there any time
soon,
15 and a third is Pine Street which is already in the Ashton
16 district. So it is a clerical error because that was

17 viewed by the task force as being a redistrict because
18 they're already going to Ashton and have been for some
19 time. So we're talking about one street, three children
20 out of 750 or 780 that are being redistricted out of
21 Community.

22 Let's go run through the arguments I have heard
23 about this. One is that the bus shouldn't have to go
24 into Crestwood Court because it's a pain in the neck to
25 do that. Well, first of all, a bus goes into Silo

1 through Friars Green into Silo and comes back out, too,

2 it's remarkable how the configuration of that street
3 which is right next to my street is exactly the same as
4 mine. It's a radial street going into a circular street,
5 a bus going in and coming out. That supports, beside
the
6 fact that this is a space utilization report, not the bus
7 route minimization report, so that was completely outside
8 the scope of what they were trying to do, what they were
9 tasked to do in the first place. The other argument I
10 hear is that part of my street touches the Ashton
11 district, true or not, but also two other sides do not
12 touch the Ashton district, the east side of my street
13 doesn't. In fact, it borders, mostly borders Silo and
14 and Friars Green, and the south side of my street

15 doesn't, it borders Bear Hill Road, which will remain in

16 Community, and even accepting that nonsensical and
absurd

17 argument which I will just for purposes of discussion,

18 there is plenty of streets, plenty of Community School

19 streets that border Ashton streets, yet none of those are

20 being converted to Ashton school district. In fact,

21 Hines Road is bordered on two sides by Ashton district,

22 and it's not being converted. So none of those
arguments

23 make a whole heck of a lot of sense to me. The real

24 reason is clear why this is happening. My children and

25 the other child on this street are being targeted by,

1 this is an egregious and transparent act of racial
2 discrimination against those three children. All three
3 children are Hispanic, both of my children are, and the
4 third child is. We're talking about taking the school,
5 the wealthiest school in the town with the least number
6 of minorities, and everyone knows how miniscule that
7 number that is in Community School, and we're circling
8 one street, three kids where three out of three are
9 Hispanic and you're bussing them out of the school. You
10 want to be on the other side of those numbers in a
11 federal lawsuit. You just bring it on. I have attorneys

12 waiting to file a lawsuit under the civil rights acts in
13 this matter, under this matter, and they will do it, and
14 I'm telling you right now, there is, there is some
15 significant legal exposure that you're going to bring to
16 the school department if you try to do that. And it's
17 not just the school department that I'll bring to its
18 knees, you're going into this personally with personal
19 knowledge, with full knowledge of exactly what you're
20 doing. In fact, I'm giving you all the details right
21 now. So when you make a decision, and you target my
22 children in this way, and that other children, you're
23 doing so deliberately, and that means you will be held
24 personally accountable, too, and I'm talking about liens

25 on houses, if that's necessary, until justice is

19

1 delivered to my children. I'm not talking about people

2 that have said that they're going to support me. I know

3 Mr. Costa is one of them, and there is maybe some
others,

4 but anyone who attempts to move against my children
and

5 target my children in this way will be held accountable.

6 I have spoken to Mr. Marvin Abney. He's the

7 Director of the Office of Equity and Access in the Rhode

8 Island Department of Education. He thinks it's massive

9 discrimination. I think it's massive racial cleansing

10 myself, and I don't want to hear about any kind of
11 arrangement where my kids get to go to Community, but
12 somehow they get bussed to McCourt where every other
kid
13 in Community gets to go to North. I'm not going to
14 discuss a situation where 750 kids, 747 end up going to
15 North and the three Spanish kids get bussed to McCourt.
16 You want to try that? You see what happens, and I will
17 prevail. You can count on that.

18 (APPLAUSE)

19 MRS. MACBETH: Do we have anybody else that
20 would like to speak on behalf of the elementary?

21 MS. SHANLEY: Good evening, my name is

22 Rosanna Shanley (phonetic) I live on 38 Windsong Road.

I

23 currently have a kindergartner, Cumberland Hill

24 kindergartner at Community. So this change doesn't

25 affect me as much, but I wanted to express my concern

20

1 about stability here, because I have another child,

2 three-year-old. I'd like to find out, is this

3 redistricting a permanent plan or is it just a five-year

4 projection on three years, because I'd hate to be shifted

5 back and forth, back and forth, because according to the

6 current proposal Windsong Street is on the border, is the

7 street before Windsong, Sunny Side is at Cumberland Hill

8 and Windsong Road is at Community. So if two years
down

9 the road you think, hey, we have room now at
Community,

10 you stay here and two or three years down the road we

11 have room at Cumberland Hill, why don't you come back,

12 that does not produce stability for our children, and I

13 would definitely hate to see my kids be split into two

14 schools, so before you make a proposal I would like to

15 see if there is any long term, if there is a permanent

16 plan, or it is just an act of convenience that you're

17 going to shift us back and forth in like three or five

18 years. Thank you.

19 (APPLAUSE)

20 MR. SCOTT: My name is Dennis Scott. I live

21 at 15 Jenckes Road. My question is what kind of

22 consideration has, let me start off by saying, I have a

23 third grader at Cumberland Hill, and I notice that there

24 are, there is really no need to move any third-grade

25 students out of that school for reasons of redistricting.

21

1 My question is, what kind of consideration have you put

2 towards students who are currently receiving special

3 needs who have built up a certain level of stability with

4 those special tutors that they work with on a daily

5 basis? I think it's evident that students excel when
6 they are in environments that are stable, and pulling a
7 child out of an environment which they've been familiar
8 with and accustomed to with special needs and bringing
9 them to another school may or may not impact, but I'd
10 hate to find that it does impact my child. So my
11 question is to you, what kind of consideration have you
12 thought about or considered with students with special
13 needs. That's it.

14 (APPLAUSE)

15 MRS. MACBETH: Thank you. Is there anybody
16 else here that would like to speak on the elementary?

17 MS. ARPIN: Yes, my name is Dawn Arpin. I

18 live at 10 Windsong Road. I just have a clarifying
19 question. My daughter is in the fourth grade at
20 Cumberland Hill, entering the fifth. I know that our
21 road is moving to Community. My clarifying question is,
22 are the fifth graders definitely staying for that last
23 year at Cumberland Hill, or are they subject to move,
24 too, and of course, I do believe that, I don't mind that
25 my street is moving to Community, but I do believe that

22

1 the one last year, that those students should stay where
2 they've been the whole time, so that is my, I would like

3 that to be clear, I am not clear on how that stands.

4 **MRS. MACBETH:** Mr. Rotella, can we answer

5 that at this point?

6 **MS. ARPIN:** It's still a bit fuzzy.

7 **MR. ROTELLA:** Madam Chairperson, I believe

8 that the public hearing today is for input from the

9 public, and if, in fact, when you make your deliberations

10 you wish to answer any and all of the questions that are

11 asked I think that's the point you're going to need to do

12 that. One of the reasons why we have a stenographer is

13 to make sure that everybody's testimony is taken, that

14 all of the questions that are asked are available for the

15 school committee for their deliberations.

16 **MRS. MACBETH:** We do have your question on
17 **record.**

18 **MS. ARPIN:** Then my statement is --

19 **MRS. MACBETH:** Would you like to clarify,
20 **Dr. Morelle, would you like to clarify?**

21 **DR. MORELLE:** If you clarify the

22 **recommendation of the task force, they recommended**
grade

23 **four going to five stay, and six going to seven, seven**
24 **going to eight.**

25 **MRS. MACBETH:** The recommendation from the

1 task force, and correct me if I'm wrong, is four going to
2 five.

3 DR. MORELLE: Stay.

4 MRS. MACBETH: Stay where they are, and then
5 so on, six would go to seven, stay where they are, seven
6 would go to eight, and stay where they are. That is the
7 recommendation that came from the task force.

8 MS. ARPIN: Okay. Then my comment would be
9 that I support that. Thank you.

10 MRS. MACBETH: Thank you. Is there anybody
11 else here for elementary? Thank you.

12 MS. CROTEAU: Hi, I live on 21 Windsong. My
13 name is Sue. I have two children at Cumberland Hill.

14 One is going to go in fifth grade, and one is going into
15 the second grade, so my question is, do I have to pull
16 out my son, or is my son going to go to Community, and
17 would that entail me getting two kids, two different
18 schools on two different busses, so that's my concern
19 with my two boys.

20 MRS. MACBETH: And any questions that are

21 raised here will be part of the record, and we'll be

22 reviewing those and going through each question so
that

23 they can be answered. Is there anybody else here to

24 speak on the elementary?

25 MS. STEINKE: Kath Steinke, I'm not on one

1 of the streets affected, but I am at Community School,
2 the recommendation on January 2nd for the streets that
3 were moved from Cumberland Hill to Community, in
looking
4 at those numbers coming to our school, I look at the
5 class size, both at Community and Cumberland Hill being
6 to their max, and that I have a problem with.

7 MRS. MACBETH: Thank you. Is there anyone
8 else here to speak on the elementary? Okay. There was,
9 Mr. Rotella is saying that there was somebody here that
10 presented a plan that is with the stenographer. Leanne
11 Ross.

12 MS. ROSS: Yes.

13 MR. ROTELLA: It wasn't Leanne Ross.

14 MS. DUNCAN: It's a middle school

15 presentation. Would you like me to do it now?

16 DR. MORELLE: Plan Y was submitted to the

17 stenographer at the last hearing.

18 MR. ROTELLA: Yes, I believe this lady has a

19 plan that she wants to present to the --

20 MS. DUNCAN: It wasn't a plan, it was just a

21 comparison.

22 MRS. MACBETH: A Power Point presentation.

23 Just to note, there is a five-minute rule. Do you

24 believe that this is going to go beyond five minutes?

25

MS. DUNCAN: Is there five minutes and 30

25

1 seconds?

2 **MRS. MACBETH:** I just want to let people

3 know that it may be going a little bit beyond that.

4 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** She can have some of

5 mine.

6 **MRS. MACBETH:** She's close to five minutes.

7 **MS. DUNCAN:** I will speak quickly. Hi, my

8 name is Donna Duncan. I live on 9 Cider Court. I have a

9 daughter who's in sixth grade at North Cumberland, and I

10 have a son who's in fourth grade at Community School.

I

11 oppose Plan B, and I would like to show you why Plan B

is

12 not necessary by walking you through an analysis of

Plan

13 A data. As you know, Plan A has 16 or so streets

moving

14 kids into North Cumberland, and no students moving out

of

15 North Cumberland, so if you turn to slide No. 3 of the

16 presentation, and there is some going around for the

17 audience, this shows a future enrollment analysis of

18 North Cumberland Middle School Plan A, and kind of, my

19 neighbors and I, what we did was, we talked about a lot

20 of numbers last week, and we thought it would be a good

21 idea to show some visuals. If you look at the first bar,
22 which is a green bar, in all of the years, it shows the
23 projected enrollment of Plan A of North Cumberland.
The
24 yellow bar represents the 85 percent capacity number,
and
25 the 85 percent capacity number, as well as used in the

26

1 Torrado study, is a good utilization percentage because
2 it takes into account the patterns and uneven
3 distributions of students by age. The comfortable target
4 for North Cumberland is 822 students. The red bar
shows

5 what full capacity in North Cumberland looks like at 967
6 students. As you can clearly see by this graph, the
7 projected enrollment is well below the 85 percent
8 utilization rate. You can also see by the green bar how
9 the enrollment declines over the next several years.

10 Again, we've used Plan A numbers that was presented
by

11 the task force on these charts. Slide 4 shows the same
12 data in a little bit of a different way. The green bar

13 here shows the actual capacity percentages of North

14 Cumberland Middle School from 2007 going through
2013.

15 Again, we showed you the yellow bar, which represents
the

16 85 percent, and the red bar at 100 percent capacity. The

17 key take-away there is that the capacity percentage of

18 North Cumberland at its highest is only 72 percent with

19 Plan A. Again, highest capacity you will see going

20 through 2013 is 72 percent. You're going to be moving

16

21 streets, and you're still well below capacity. The

22 lowest percentage, by the way, is 61 percent in 2013.

23 Slide 5, you will see the enrollment represented both

24 historically and projected from 2001 right through 2013.

25 The key point there is enrollment is higher, or was

1 higher in 2002, 2003, and for that matter 2005, and we'll

2 see it again in the foreseeable future. Enrollment

3 declining were below capacity and the number of
students

4 enrolled at North Cumberland was higher years ago than
it

5 is today.

6 Slide 6, we use a calculation that was presented to

7 us by the Cumberland Fire Department to determine
school

8 capacity. The calculation is simple, number of the

9 classrooms times 24. The goal here is really to do a

10 reality check of the data we had to insure its accuracy.

11 On the January 30th Space Utilization Task Force
meeting

12 Dr. Kenworthy said North Cumberland had 40 full size
13 rooms. This equates to a capacity, using this
14 calculation, of 960 students. This is in line with the

15 967 number found in the Torrado report. We did the
same

16 for the 34 rooms that Mr. Pires said was a number of

17 rooms at McCourt. We're waiting for an updated report
to

18 take into account the addition put onto McCourt just to

19 confirm the accuracy of this number. You will notice,

20 however, that North Cumberland is larger in capacity
than

21 McCourt.

22 Slide 7 is more of an interesting find. When the

23 school committee redistricted in 1998, what is now

24 **McCourt was very full, and part of the goal was to**
25 **redistrict students into North Cumberland from McCourt.**

28

1 **When we were listening to the Cumberland School**
Committee

2 **public hearing tapes from 1998, Joseph Nasif, who was**
the

3 **superintendent at that time said, and I quote, "We have**
4 **had as many as 12 sixth grades at North Cumberland and**
5 **this year we are down to ten." That was July 1998.**

6 **North Cumberland is considered a nine-track school**
today.

7 **So how can there be a space issue if there were up to 12**

8 sixth grades at this school ten years ago, and at the
9 time, remember, they were trying to move kids into North
10 Cumberland.

11 Slide 8 is just a myth versus fact slide. It
12 clarifies some discussion points we've heard over the
13 last couple of weeks. The first myth is that North
14 Cumberland is overcrowded. As we've shown in the
15 previous slides, North Cumberland is absolutely not
16 overcrowded, a school that has adequate space to
17 accommodate today's students and future students.

18 Myth 2 is that our children will be just fine if you
19 split them up, and actually the term I'd heard is that
20 they'll adjust. The fact is that there's been study,

21 after study, after study done, and they all show that
22 splitting children up from their friends has a negative
23 impact, especially at the middle school age. Unless,
24 we're in a crisis situation here, where we need to be
25 creative for the greater good, it does not make sense to

29

1 split up the school in our district. You should not
2 redistrict our children to make it administratively
3 easier. Again, there is no crisis here.

4 Myth 3 is that the task force did not look at future
5 developments. This is absolutely not true. I was at the

6 meetings, and the truth is that the planning board
7 presented data, and they consciously decided not to take
8 development into account. There was way too much
9 uncertainty at the time. And since they decided task
10 forces would probably press it every five years or so
11 they were going to table that for future task force
12 discussions.

13 So in summary what I'd like to say is that there has
14 been no legitimate reason presented to us to warrant the
15 move of Bear Hill children, of our children, from North
16 Cumberland Middle School to McCourt Middle School.

There

17 is absolutely room for everybody, and I thank you for
18 your time.

19 (APPLAUSE)

20 MRS. MACBETH: Thank you. Is there anybody

21 that would like to speak for the middle school?

22 MR. KELLY: Brian Kelly, I live on Hayfield

23 Lane. Just to clarify a couple of points, I was one of

24 the members on the task force, and indeed I was one of, I

25 believe there was seven, I was one of the seven that

30

1 voted not, my vote was not to support Plan B, but to

2 essentially move Plan B to the committee for the

3 consideration along with Plan A, but I just want to go on

4 the record in saying, and I said this to some of the

5 parents who asked me, outside of those meetings and
since

6 then, that I support Plan A. One, because it's the least

7 disruptive to the students in that area, and certainly

8 those kids that are in the schools right now. I have

9 been through this process before in Pawtucket. I know

10 how sensitive it is to parents and their children who are

11 possibly subject to being moved from either their current

12 school or their, where they would be expecting to go
with

13 their neighbors and their friends, so I just want to go

14 on the record in saying I don't support Plan B. I do

15 support Plan A, and the second point I would like to
make

16 is when we went through this process we had a whole
host
17 of information that either was provided to us by the
18 administration or information we had requested from the
19 administration, and one of the pieces of information that
20 we had asked for, and actually I was the one who had
21 asked for this information was a list of the streets by
22 number, with the number of students that were in each
23 grade at each school, and I did that for a specific
24 reason, so that we knew that we weren't shooting darts
in
25 the dark, and to this gentleman's point having been

1 through this process, I will speak for myself, any
2 decisions that I made on that task force were in no way,
3 you know, based upon information or knowledge about
4 specific children, their nationality, nothing.

5 MR. ROSSIGNOLI: Tell it to the judge when I
6 take you to court.

7 MR. THIBODEAU: You're out of order,
8 Mr. Rossignoli.

9 MR. ROSSIGNOLI: I'll say whatever I want.

10 MR. THIBODEAU: Officer, can you remove that
11 gentleman from the audience?

12 MRS. MACBETH: Mr. Thibodeau, I'm running

13 the meeting.

14 MR. THIBODEAU: Run it right.

15 MRS. MACBETH: Excuse me. Give me a chance.

16 Mr. Kelly, continue.

17 MR. THIBODEAU: There should be nobody from

18 the audience yelling out.

19 MR. KELLY: Certainly, during the task force

20 meetings there was a parent who brought up that
concern,

21 and having been through this issue in Pawtucket and

22 desegregation I made it very clear at that time that,

23 based upon my experience, that the committee move
forward

24 with their charge, which was to come up with a street

25 list for elementary and middle school, and we did not do

32

1 so in a manner which intentionally caused segregation
and

2 that would not be an issue. I'm speaking for myself.

3 The information I was provided with, lists that we worked

4 off of, it did not have names of students, it did not

5 have nationalities of student. It simply had the names

6 and streets, the address number, and the grade. So we

7 would be able to, if necessary, look at streets and

8 determine where they currently fell within the schools

9 if we needed to make recommendations on, if we needed
to

10 make recommendations on moving kids. So I will say
that

11 for the public record. I will say it now. I will say it

12 down the line if it becomes an issue. I just want to put

13 that on the public record.

14 MR. ROSSIGNOLI: You're a liar. You're

15 targeting my kids, and you're going to pay for it.

16 (APPLAUSE)

17 MRS. MACBETH: Anybody else here that would

18 like to speak regarding the task force for the middle

19 school? Please state your name and address.

20 MR. RAMZI: Nick Ramzi (phonetic), 5 Eagle

21 Drive. Good evening, my name is Nick Ramzi, I am here
to

22 share my thoughts and feelings about the proposal set
23 forward to the school committee. First off, I would like
24 to say that I understand why you're doing what you're
25 doing. I think that the impact on the students will hurt

33

1 more than it helps. One reason I believe that is because
2 going from fifth to sixth grade was a huge transition to
3 any kid. Now that I'm in seventh grade I have gotten
4 really used to the school. Now because of proposals that
5 are in front of me my neighborhood and many others
might
6 be changed to McCourt Middle School. This proposal will

7 cause the students, us, to a brand-new school for only
8 one year, and after that year we'll be entering high
9 school, and if you were to look at that over a five-year
10 period that will be four different schools. Also, the
11 friends that I've made, ever since my first day of
12 elementary school until now are all going to NCMS, and
13 now because of the proposals a small group of us will be
14 transferred to McCourt Middle for just one year.

15 Many of the kids in the neighborhood have also done
16 sports. At NCMS once you play a sport you become
known

17 for it. For example, I have spent two years on both the
18 wrestling team and the cross country team. This year
the

19 wrestling team accomplished the state championship
title.

20 Also, the cross country team took many first-place titles
21 in the state meet. We have become a very close-knit
22 family, and the small portion of the cross country team,
23 including myself, went to the cross country national
24 championship meet in Kansas, and we placed top 10
25 nationally. If you go through the proposal to transfer

1 us to McCourt we would have to start again in our middle
2 school careers sportswise. And, finally, I would ask
3 that you give the proposal your utmost consideration, but

4 not only how it affect the streets but how it affects the
5 students. Thank you for your time.

6 MRS. MACBETH: Did you write your name and
7 address on the paper?

8 MR. DIGIULIO: My name is Dennis DiGiulio.

9 I just wanted to check on something. On one of the

10 agendas it talked about the two middle school principals

11 proposing possible changes to the plan, I wanted to
make

12 sure that we could reserve comments until after that.

13 I'm one of the parents that lives in north Cumberland,

14 north of Mendon Road. My kids go to Ashton and North

15 Middle. I have no issue with that. The plan doesn't

16 change that, either plan, and I want to make sure it
17 stays that way, but I want to hear what the two
18 principals have to say.

19 MRS. MACBETH: We are going to double-check
20 the agenda, because I don't think on the agenda that it
21 was for changes proposed.

22 MR. DIGIULIO: Not on the last one, one of
23 them said --

24 MRS. MACBETH: Okay. We will give
25 opportunity to both of the principals to speak, and if

1 nobody disagrees at this point, I think that would be

2 good because I think a lot of the community members are
3 waiting to hear what they have to say. Dr. Morelle.

4 **DR. MORELLE:** Thank you. By way of
5 introduction, what I'd like to do is provide some
6 clarifying information in terms of, I acted as a liaison
7 to the school committee and the Space Utilization Task
8 Force, and I provided them with their charge. There were
9 three objectives, and I believe those objectives should
10 be read into the record. The first objective was to
11 analyze the space usage and student enrollment at the
12 five elementary schools and two middle schools, and I
13 clarified that for them in discussion that evening as two
14 prevailing issues. The first issue, what modifications

15 or adjustments to student assignments needed to be
16 considered in order for John J. McLaughlin Cumberland
17 Hill School to return to a K-5 configuration. When the

18 school committee moved kindergartners to Community
School

19 two years ago, your vote at that time was predicated on
20 the fact that that was short term and that kindergartners
21 would be returned, and I explained that to the committee.

22 The second issue was what modifications or
adjustments to

23 student's assignments needed to be considered in order
to

24 integrate the Cumberland Preschool Center at one of the
25 five elementary school locations, and I indicated to the

1 task force that that was desirable, but not required if
2 in fact they were able to find the space for that. The
3 second objective was to provide recommendation to the
4 Cumberland School Committee for student assignment
areas
5 for each of the five elementary schools, and two middle
6 schools, and again I describe the prevailing issue as
7 what modifications, deletions, or additions needed to be
8 made to the Town of Cumberland street list in order to
9 provide the Cumberland School Committee with
10 recommendations for updated student assignment areas
for

11 the five elementary schools and two middle schools, and
12 explained to the task force that their deliverable to the
13 school committee was an elementary street assignment
14 list, what they've described as a street directory to
15 you, that there was currently an elementary street
16 directory which they could modify as needed, and that
the
17 second deliverable was a middle school street directory
18 which we actually did not have at the time. So they were
19 creating that, and the third objective for the task force
20 was to attend the public hearings to be held by the
21 school committee prior to any action that you would take
22 on their recommendation, and as you can see from the

two

23 hearings tonight and previously task force members
have
24 been here and providing testimony to you. With that,
and
25 I have provided the stenographer with this paperwork,
the

37

1 additional information that I provided was historical
2 data on the students that have been displaced from each
3 of the elementary schools since the school year
4 2000-2001. Each of the school committee members has a
5 copy of that matrix at your places this evening, and I
6 have provided the stenographer with a copy of that for

7 the transcript. I would like to introduce Kathy Gibney

8 from Cumberland Preschool Center, who was asked to
make

9 some remarks about the first recommendation of the task

10 force that if we could meet the educational regulations

11 and building regulations that we will move the preschool

12 center to B.F. Norton.

13 MS. GIBNEY: Thank you. I am here to

14 support that suggestion and that position, because as
the

15 leader of teaching and learning at the preschool center

16 as well as the child output coordinator for the town I do

17 not see that this would impact either teaching or

18 learning at the preschool level. We will continue with

19 our curriculum that is aligned with the early learning
20 standard, and we'll also make sure that we continue our
21 assessments and our report card writing reporting that
is
22 also aligned with those standards. So the teaching and
23 learning is going on under a different roof, that's going
24 on under a different roof and will not change with this
25 proposal. Thank you.

38

1 DR. MORELLE: And in addition, Mr. Hilton is
2 here to address the issue of any building regulations
3 because the task force was concerned about whether or

not

4 a move from the Our Lady of Fatima Center that we lease
5 now to B.F. Norton would be able to meet building
6 regulations. Would it be the pleasure of the committee
7 for him to speak on that issue at this time?

8 MRS. MACBETH: Yes, it is.

9 DR. MORELLE: Thank you.

10 MR. HILTON: The only regulation that
11 currently covers the early childhood center is the state
12 fire code. Under the state fire code grades pre-K, K and
13 1, have to be housed in a level that is on ground level
14 in their normal entrance and exit from a building. There
15 can be no stairs involved, and the only other caveat in

16 that regulation was that grade 2 there is only allowed to
17 go up one flight of stairs. They can't be housed on a
18 third floor of the building. However, looking at the
19 codes and various regulations that's the only ones that
20 are applicable to the move to B.F. Norton.

21 MRS. MACBETH: You said these are the
22 current regulations, correct?

23 MR. HILTON: These are the current.

24 MRS. MACBETH: Thank you.

25 MR. COSTA: Mr. Hilton, that's currently

1 what's in place right now, right?

2 **MR. HILTON:** I don't really know the grade
3 **configuration on the first floor at B.F. Norton.**

4 **MR. COSTA:** I think it is, K, kindergarten,
5 **first grade, Dr. Morelle; is that right, right now**
6 **presently?**

7 **MRS. MACBETH:** The principal is here.

8 **DR. MORELLE:** We've been in the building a
9 **number of times and coordinated with Mrs. Maloney, and**

10 **think, what I think we can state reasonably well, is that**

11 **based on the current program at B. F. Norton, and what**

we

12 **can predicate for the foreseeable future is that we could**

13 **house the preschool center at B.F. Norton. We only**

know

14 the foreseeable future.

15 MRS. MACBETH: Thank you. Mr. Costa, any

16 further questions?

17 MR. COSTA: No.

18 MRS. MACBETH: Thank you, Mr. Hilton.

19 DR. MORELLE: At this time, then, I would

20 like to introduce Dr. Kenworthy, the principal of North

21 Cumberland Middle School and Mr. Pires, the principal of

22 Joseph L. McCourt Middle School. Thank you,
gentlemen.

23 MR. PIRES: Good evening, my name is Armand

24 Pires. I'm the Principal of McCourt Middle School, and I

25 have just a few comments, and before I begin I was also

1 member of the Space Utilization Task Force, and I think
2 based on some of the comments I heard there, as well as
3 here last week, what I need to say is that I'm very proud
4 to be the principal of McCourt Middle School. Every day
5 I work with an exceptional faculty and staff that do
6 absolutely everything they can to educate the students of
7 Cumberland that attend McCourt Middle school.

8 Just a couple of clarifying statements, I guess. As
9 I discussed at the Space Utilization Committee, the
10 scheduling of a middle school is very different than an

11 elementary school. In an elementary school typically
you

12 take the number of students and multiply it by the
number

13 of available classrooms, because middle school
students

14 move throughout the day and attend different curricular

15 experiences and different spaces, it becomes a little bit

16 more difficult. We have, in McCourt Middle School, 26

17 regular education classrooms, seven specialized

18 classrooms for areas like art, home economics,
industrial

19 arts, et cetera, and eight instructional spaces which are

20 used either for student support in special education or

21 districtwide educational programs such as the ELL

program

22 and the severe profound special-education program. I
23 believe that we can effectively schedule, as I mentioned
24 in the Space Utilization committee, and support 200
25 students in each grade, which would be an ideal total of

41

1 about 600 students at McCourt, and if necessary we
could

2 accommodate up to 650 students.

3 DR. KENWORTHY: Good evening, I'm speaking
4 this evening as Principal of North Cumberland Middle
5 school where I have been principal for the last four

6 years, however, prior to that, in my time in the

7 district, I was the assistant principal at then

8 Cumberland Middle School, now McCourt Middle School
for

9 two years. Like Mr. Pires I can say that both schools

10 are great schools. However, obviously I'm speaking

11 tonight from the perspective of the principal of North

12 Cumberland Middle School. I believe, from that

13 perspective as the principal of North Cumberland Middle

14 School, that we are close to peak operational capacity.

15 The nature of a middle school schedule, where students

16 move from classroom to classroom throughout the day,
is

17 very different from an elementary schedule. I can assure

18 you that all of our classroom spaces are currently being
19 utilized for instructional purposes, and we make an
20 effort to maximize those spaces wherever possible. At
21 North this would include the use of 30 regular

22 classrooms, seven specialized classrooms, and five
spaces

23 for student support. Despite my best efforts I can

24 assure you that we currently have space issues that

25 remain unresolved. Some examples of this would be the

42

1 lack of a consistent room that can be used for therapy

2 services, pull out instruction that is currently taking

3 place in noninstructional spaces, and the fact that all
4 major district special-education programs at the middle
5 level are currently housed at the McCourt Middle School.
6 What I can tell you as principal of North Cumberland
7 Middle School is that any relief in population would
8 allow me to schedule the building more effectively.
9 Thank you.

10 MRS. MACBETH: The committee to hold
11 questions till a later time, Mr. Rotella, for these two
12 people, for these two principals, or are they here to
13 answer questions at this point?

14 DR. MORELLE: Mrs. MacBeth, if I can answer
15 that.

16 **MRS. MACBETH: Yes.**

17 **DR. MORELLE: I have spoken with all of the**

18 **administrators who are in the district that you are going**

19 **to have discussion on these issues at a future school**

20 **committee meeting and ask them to be available when**
this

21 **item is on an agenda for discussion. If I directed them**

22 **inappropriately, I apologize.**

23 **MR. MACBETH: That's fine. When we do**

24 **report in the future, given some of the information that**

25 **came up today from the principals, and specifically**
North

1 Cumberland with his belief that they are close to
2 capacity versus information that were given, if you could
3 please provide the committee with the information to
4 that, what you're basing that belief on, I think that
5 would assist the committee when we look at all of the
6 information that's been given to us.

7 DR. MORELLE: And I think that's been one of
8 the limiting factors of the format that we're using right
9 now in terms of testimony, and that's what the important
10 nature of the discussion will be when you receive the
11 transcripts from this and you have more information.

12 MRS. MACBETH: Thank you.

13 DR. MORELLE: Thank you.

14 **MRS. MACBETH: Mr. Wagner.**

15 **MR. WAGNER: Just real quick, and it is not**

16 **really so much of a question, but it's more of an add-on**

17 **from the comments that Mrs. MacBeth made. When we**
do get

18 **to that next session, it appears to me that it looks like**

19 **the big difference here is going to be the information as**

20 **being currently utilized by the administration and see**

21 **the information that I received, and also the Plan C that**

22 **I had also gotten appears to be using the, what is it,**

23 **the Torrado report. So, it sounds to me, or at least**

24 **looks to me from looking at this that there are some**

25 **significant differences in the way the space is being**

1 utilized one versus the other, and we may need some
2 clarification as to what those differences are.

3 MRS. MACBETH: Thank you, Mr. Wagner. At
4 this point is there anybody in the audience that would
5 like to speak? Mr. McLaughlin.

6 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Jim McLaughlin, 15 Garden
7 Street. Now, I have just been sitting here tonight, and
8 the Space Utilization Program, I listened to so many
9 parents with so many questions, and what I'm basically
10 trying to say is there was a gentleman with the three
11 Spanish children, having three in one family to take a

12 hit. That's a lot. There was a question of the special
13 needs. It is turmoil, you know, and I feel for all of
14 these young parents, and I have to ask myself, okay,
15 being in this town quite a few years, and I'd ask you
16 people to think about this space utilization, is it worth
17 it? All right. I would look at the number of families
18 coming in, all right. The housing market the way it is
19 today, all right. People aren't buying homes. Are we
20 going to have an upsurge, or are we going to have a
21 decline? I have seen Cumberland High School go from X
22 amount to X amount. You people probably have, too. Is
23 it worth it in the long run? And I would ask you people
24 to take a good hard look at this. There were graphs

25 shown here tonight that illustrated, all right. Most of

45

1 these schools are not maxed out, and we're looking at

2 space utilization versus this young man over here who
has

3 a legitimate problem, you know what I mean, the special

4 needs mother, the guy with the three kids taking a hit,

5 you know, so please take that into consideration. Thank

6 you.

7 (APPLAUSE)

8 MS. COUGHLIN: My name is Bethany Coughlin,

9 and I live on Cargill Road. I am in a unique position in

10 that I'm a teacher at North Cumberland Middle School,
and

11 I'm a parent of a fifth grader who would be adversely

12 affected by Plan B. I have been in a teacher in

13 Cumberland for the past 18 years, having spent my
entire

14 career at the middle level. I feel I have a great deal

15 of experience with middle school students. I have two

16 points I'd like to make tonight. The first is that

17 balancing the numbers between the two middle schools

18 looks very nice on paper, but we're not dealing with only

19 numbers. These are little kids. These kids are making

20 the most difficult transition in their school years. The

21 elementary model is very different from the middle

school

22 model. Anyone who has taught sixth grade can tell you
23 that changing classes, lockers, a new school, all are
24 extremely stressful to sixth graders. I myself have
25 walked through the sixth grade wing early in the school

46

1 year and have observed the struggle of these students
2 acclimating themselves to their new environment. Many
3 students have difficulty making the transition, and quite
4 often they suffer academically as a result. Targeting so
5 few children and making this transition much more
6 difficult for them is truly unfair.

7 My second point is to question why we have a need
8 for a balanced population in both schools when clearly
9 one school is bigger than the other. While analyzing the
10 enrollment figures that were provided to the middle
11 school parents this past week I noticed that the numbers
12 for Plan B created another problem. In three years North
13 will be the school that is underutilized based on its
14 capacity. This, again, is at the expense of adversely
15 affecting so few students each year, 15 next year, 10 the
16 following year, followed by 13, then nine, and then ten.
17 So I conclude with a request I ask that when you're
18 contemplating your decision you ask yourself, do the
19 benefits of balanced schools or an ideal number of

20 students outweigh the consequences of displacing so
few

21 students so as to adversely affect their transition to

22 middle school. In my opinion, a yes vote to Plan B
means

23 just that numbers are more important than students.

24 Thank you.

25 (APPLAUSE)

47

1 MR. DIGIULIO: Just me again. One of the

2 school committee members just referenced a Plan C that

3 I'm not aware of.

4 **MR. WAGNER:** That was the document that was
5 provided by one of the -- do you want to review it real
6 quick for us?

7 **MS. ROSS:** Sure. Absolutely.

8 **(OFF THE RECORD DISCUSSION)**

9 **MRS. MACBETH:** This is somebody from the
10 public that is speaking on an idea that she has. She's
11 allowed to present it.

12 **MR. WAGNER:** Did you bring additional copies
13 so everyone in the committee can get a copy?

14 **MS. ROSS:** You know what? I submitted them.
15 Yes, I do have extra copies. I submitted them last week.
16 I'm not sure how quick that turnaround is. If you want

17 to, I can give you the spreadsheet that's identical to

18 Plan A and B that you can give for comparative
purposes.

19 There is a few there. Can you spread them out? You
have

20 a copy of it, too. Lisa has a copy of it.

21 Good evening, everyone. My name is Leanne Ross. I

22 live on 14 Oakledge Road in the Bear Hill area, and I

23 will speak to Plan C rather briefly, but I don't want to

24 go over my five minutes, so I will speak to that briefly,

25 and then I will move onto what I wanted to say. Plan C

1 was something that I started thinking about after I

2 listened to the proposals that were submitted to the

3 school committee. Those were Plan A and Plan B, and
Plan

4 A, in simplistic terms, takes a group that's in Ashton,

5 that goes to Ashton School and takes a group around the

6 Cumberland House of Pizza area and street assigns them
to

7 North Cumberland Middle School, whereas all of the rest

8 of the Ashton students go to McCourt Middle School.
Plan

9 B takes the same group in the Ashton Cumberland House
of

10 Pizza neighborhood and moves that group to North

11 Cumberland Middle School, and then takes the Bear Hill

12 neighborhood and moves that group to McCourt. So

13 naturally my question would be, well, why we would
want

14 to do that. So we asked why. Is it because of taxes?

15 Well, why would you move one out and then one in?
That

16 didn't make sense, so we asked, well, maybe it was

17 because of money, you're saving money. Well, that
wasn't

18 brought up. So we thought, well, what else could it be,

19 and then I started looking at it, I said, you know what,

20 if there isn't really a problem here. Then why are we

21 offering solutions when there isn't a problem, and if we

22 are looking at this, why don't we take a bird's-eye view

23 and kind of look at what is the best solution to the

24 problem, and when you take a look at some of the other
25 things that I looked at in some of the other school

49

1 districts is feeder schools are a very valid way of
2 transitioning students from the elementary level to the
3 middle school level basically because when you do that
4 you keep groups of children together that have sewn
5 friendships over a long period of time, and it makes that
6 transition smoother and easier for them. I have done
7 research on it, and I gave you all a copy of the research
8 that I had done last week about feeder schools. The
9 other thing that is important to realize with this is

10 basically it looks, it makes sense, when you look at the
11 numbers, Plan C numbers, if you look at the spreadsheet
12 say look at it, compared to A, compared to B, look at the
13 capacity, look at the utilization, and it all makes
14 sense, and it keeps our community unified and together.

15 So there is basically, to me it looked like that was a

16 pretty good solution to whatever potential problems
there

17 might have been in the past, but basically, so that's

18 Plan C in a nutshell, and basically it's keeping feeder

19 schools together, keeping our community together,
keeping

20 our community unified, and that's how it jumps into the

21 next thing. I'm piggybacking off of what some of the

22 other folks have said tonight. I am a resident in the
23 Bear Hill area. The middle school proposals that are in
24 front of the committee are of great concern to me. The
25 facts relating to my concern of these proposals have
been

50

1 presented and are very clear. The analysis of the fact
2 that you have heard from others tonight and myself tell
3 us that Plan B cannot and should not be supported. In
4 addition, a valid and fact-based solution, Plan C has
5 been presented. The facts are, actually they're
6 persuasive enough, and can stand alone on their merit,

7 beyond these facts, though, and at the very heart of my

8 concern is the divisiveness of the proposal named Plan
B.

9 To divide our school committee tears upon which the
very

10 fabric upon which a community is built, which is support

11 and friendships. Plan B provides a community,
Community

12 School. Why would we want to do that? What facts

13 support this division, none, and Plan B students who
have

14 sewn seeds of friendships throughout their elementary

15 years will be ripped from their support system, dividing

16 friendships. Why would we want to do that? What facts

17 support this division, none. Families who have watched

18 their sons and daughters grow together and thrive with
19 the support that they gave to each other will be
20 separated. In Plan B 13 percent of siblings next year
21 and 21 percent of siblings the following year in the Bear
22 Hill area will be divided. Why do we want to do that?
23 What facts support this division? None. The facts
24 instead expose why Plan B should not be voted for by
25 anyone. To vote for Plan B would be to ignore the facts,

1 to divide our school community, to separate our students
2 from their friends, and to divide our families.

3 I encourage you to look at fact-based solution, Plan
4 C being one solution, that would promote parents and
5 school partnerships that will encourage school
6 friendships, and that will keep our families together.

7 (APPLAUSE)

8 MR. DIGIULIO: Okay. That's where I figured
9 that would go. First of all, let's start with the facts
10 north of Mendon, north of 295 is not being moved from
11 McCourt. It's always been McCourt. I mean, it's always
12 been a north neighborhood. It's not being changed. It's
13 where they go. We go to Ashton. We were moved their
14 during the last committee meeting. I wasn't there. I
15 don't know why it was moved, but if we're going to,

16 during the committee during the school utilization board
17 they started talking about feeder schools, and that was
18 taken off the board immediately. If it was, their
19 discussions were that the Bear Hill neighborhood would
be
20 moved to Ashton, and that possibly we'd be moved.
21 That's, that was my concern. A, B I'm fine with. C, I'm
22 not comfortable with it. C I'm not fine with. We won't
23 be moved again. What separates me from Ashton, my
24 children and McCourt is 295, a mile and a half of
25 commercial development, miles of, between the schools.

1 It is five stop lights to Ashton. It's eight to nine to
2 McCourt. It's one to North Middle. We live in north.
3 One of the things that's lost here is Bear Hill is split
4 in half. Where is there Ashton, approximated to Ashton?
5 The next-door neighbor's property line. Where is there a
6 division to McCourt? The next door neighbor's property
7 line. If we are going to talk about feeder schools, we
8 are going to talk about opening up the elementary school
9 discussion again. Okay. I live in, my neighbors go to
10 Cumberland Hill. We are separated enough with going to
11 Ashton. I love Ashton. I volunteer there. My wife
12 volunteers there. We are there all the time. We put
13 time in every single week. We volunteer for the schools

14 and the community, but if we are going to talk about C,
15 we are going to open this whole thing back up again,
16 okay. That's what I was afraid of. My neighborhood's
17 been moved once. It won't be moved again. Not for
18 reasons that don't make any sense. It's not even half
19 the distance from Bear Hill to McCourt than it is to
20 North. I'm almost six miles to McCourt. It doesn't make
21 sense. My kids are separated now. My daughter does
fine
22 in North. Sixth grader, no problem. I have four more on
23 the way. They're all in Ashton. I don't want them
24 moved. They do great. They're good schools, and also
we
25 keep talking about effect on children, that it's not the

1 easiest way to go, to move them from, you know, from
2 their, to move them as a minority going into a middle
3 school. Well, guess what, the easiest way isn't always
4 the best way. My daughter is fine. She's looking
5 forward to meeting up at the high school with the rest of
6 the her friends.

7 (APPLAUSE)

8 MRS. MACBETH: Thank you.

9 MS. VALENTINE: Hi, my name is Laura

10 Valentine. I live at 3 Lafayette Avenue. Mine is not in

11 question to regarding Space Utilization Task Force. It's

12 regarding the elementary and preschool program.

13 **MRS. MACBETH:** This meeting is strictly for

14 space utilization.

15 **MS. VALENTINE:** Dr. Morelle had talked about

16 putting it on the agenda for this meeting. Is there a

17 meeting coming up that it will be, that was from the last

18 meeting?

19 **MRS. MACBETH:** Is the topic.

20 **MS. VALENTINE:** The movement of the

21 preschool program.

22 **MRS. MACBETH:** So you're speaking on the

23 movement of the preschool.

24 **MS. VALENTINE:** It is not in regards to

25 street. It's the program.

54

1 MRS. MACBETH: As long as it's in regards to

2 space utilization, absolutely. Go ahead.

3 MS. VALENTINE: My only question is when you

4 take a school that's in danger of failing, how do you put

5 another distraction within it, which would be the

6 preschool program. And if that can be addressed at
some

7 point. That's it.

8 MRS. MACBETH: Thank you.

9 MS. LANGTON: Hi, my name is Kathy Langton.

10 I live at 6 Oakledge Road. I would like to start out

11 with saying to Mr. Pires I have the utmost respect for

12 Mr. Pires and McCourt Middle School. My best friend

13 teaches there. I think they have a wonderful staff, and

14 my issues with Plan B have absolutely nothing to do
with

15 McCourt, because I think it's a great school. My issue

16 is that if my son is redistricted under Plan B, he'll be

17 one of eight kids out of 82 in his class who will get

18 split off and go to McCourt, and the other 76 will go to

19 North. To me that is where my issue lies. So I wanted

20 to publicly say I think there are a lot of us here from

21 Bear Hill it's not that we think McCourt is an inferior

22 school, we don't, and that is not the issue, so I wanted
23 to publicly say that.

24 One of the community members questioned the
Torrado

25 report, which I am the one who started referencing this

55

1 recently, and I just wanted to bring up some facts about
2 the Torrado report for those who don't know. This was a
3 report that was commissioned by the Cumberland School
4 Department to the tune of \$52,000 in 2002, and it was
5 done to analyze space usage in the schools and in our
6 town. I had requested from the school department just

7 recently capacity numbers for North Cumberland Middle
8 School, and the report that was given to me was the
9 Torrado report. So that was the report that was provided
10 to me. My initial request of Mr. Hilton was for capacity
11 at NCMS. If you go back to my original e-mail to
12 Mr. Hilton I specifically said NCMS capacity and then it
13 was referenced back that this architectural report
14 existed.

15 In the report they talk about an 85 percent
16 utilization rate, and they say that they use that number
17 because it takes into account grouping patterns and
18 uneven distribution of children by age. They recognize
19 that you can't use a hundred percent capacity for a

20 middle school. This 85 percent number was good
enough to

21 use in the Cumberland comprehensive plan which was

22 adopted by the Town of Cumberland in 2003 and the
State

23 of Rhode Island in 2004. If you pull the Cumberland

24 comprehensive plan off of the Town of Cumberland
website,

25 it goes through all the capacities of all of the schools,

56

1 and the number that is used is 822, which is the 85

2 percent utilization rate for NCMS.

3 In addition, the Torrado report was good enough to

4 support building projects that have been done in town.

5 The CHS 2010 phase three executive summary, which I

6 pulled off of the school department website references

7 the Torrado report when it talks about building done at

8 the school. The Torrado reports itself, if you go back

9 through the Providence Journal archives and the Valley

10 Breeze archives continually references building projects

11 that we have used. The building at Cumberland Middle

12 School which is now McCourt that was done in 2002 was

13 based on recommendations in Torrado. The Torrado
report

14 recommended the current building that's going on in

15 Ashton and Cumberland Hill for community space that's

16 being built. So I don't think that because all of a

17 sudden that number doesn't fit with our preconceived
18 notion of what the size the middle school should be that
19 we can just toss that data out. If we have better data
20 available then maybe we should be using it and maybe
that
21 should be referenced in the Cumberland Comprehensive
22 Plan, but until we make those changes this is the
23 document that we're using. This is the document that
the
24 school department commissioned, and this is the
document
25 that the town paid \$52,000 for, and we have, why not use

1 it when it is what, it meets all our other needs. I

2 don't think you can turn around and say all of a sudden

3 it doesn't meet all our needs.

4 **MS. PROVOST:** Hello, my name is Nadine

5 Provost, and I live on Blossom Court. At the last public

6 hearing there was some history mentioned regarding the

7 past redistricting and promises made for the Ashton

8 School. I know for a fact the only two up there that

9 were involved in the past redistricting was Mr. Costa and

10 Mr. Thibodeau. We wanted to research the facts, and
due

11 to the unavailability of meeting minutes that were

12 mentioned at the last meeting we watched the videotape

13 from the school committee of 1998. The facts are as
14 follows: No. 1, a redistricting proposal was opposed;
15 No. 2, the controversial issue at the time was the
16 shifting of some neighborhoods from Cumberland Hill to
17 Ashton School; No. 3, there was an agreement at the
time
18 that these neighborhoods could attend North
Cumberland
19 Middle School. The question did arise how long this
20 agreement would be in effect. It was stated at the June
21 25, 1998 meeting that this agreement reached today
would
22 have a shelf life as long as the shelf life of the
23 committee itself. Mr. Nasif did interject and stated
24 this agreement held true for as long as he was

25 superintendent. Fact No. 4, there is no current

58

1 agreement. There is no reason to perpetuate a quick fix
2 that was done ten years ago. The fact remains, No. 5,
3 there is now space in our middle schools to keep our
4 elementary schools whole. Both our middle schools are
5 under 85 percent capacity now through the year 2014.
6 Thank you.

7 MRS. MACBETH: Thank you. Mr. Costa.

8 MR. COSTA: Nadine, you told me that you had
9 reviewed the tapes ten years ago.

10 MS. PROVOST: I did.

11 MR. COSTA: The question I have for you

12 tonight is did Mr. Thibodeau and I look the same as we

13 did ten years ago?

14 MS. PROVOST: No, you both aged beautifully.

15 You look much better now, much younger.

16 MR. WAGNER: You know, your credibility is

17 taking a real hit here.

18 MRS. MACBETH: That's okay that she goes

19 next?

20 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Not a problem.

21 MRS. MACBETH: The person who is at the

22 podium right now, if you would like to speak now, that's

23 fine.

24 MS. FARNESI: Hi, my name is Valerie

25 Farnesi, and I live in Apple Ridge Estates. Let me start

59

1 by saying that I do not agree with option B, and let me

2 tell you why. I attended every Space Utilization Task

3 Force meeting since day one. The charge of that

4 committee was to have Cumberland Hill return to a K-5

5 elementary school and to have a street list for the

6 middle schools to alleviate the problem that some of the

7 students at Ashton have of not knowing which middle

8 school they'll be attending. Secondary to these issues

9 was to integrate the Cumberland Preschool Center into
one

10 of the five elementary schools to where it currently is

11 at Lady of Fatima. The committee came up with two

12 options for the Cumberland Hill kindergartners and a

13 probable solution for the preschool, but I feel they fell

14 short on middle schools. While coming up with a
solution

15 for Ashton, they ended up splitting Community School,

16 which they didn't have to do. There are only 14 fifth

17 graders coming out of Community this year to make up
the

18 Bear Hill area. I don't know the number of fourth

19 graders, and I can't imagine there are more than that for

600
20 the following year. Can you imagine out of more than
21 students 14 need to wave good-bye to their friends, who
22 will all be going to North Cumberland Middle School
while
23 they travel to McCourt where they know no one.
24 According to last week's testimony from some of the
25 parents, North Cumberland Middle School is not even at
85

60

1 percent capacity, so I need this committee to tell me
2 what the so-called overcrowding is at North Cumberland
3 Middle School. Is it due to the fact that we keep

4 cutting teachers because of the budget, or is it truly
5 because the building is too small, because if 14 students
6 is going to make the doors and windows bust open then I
7 can see the issue, but I don't think that this is what
8 will happen.

9 In conclusion, I think that those committee members
10 with children still in school, whether public, private or
11 homeschooled should go home tonight and say to them
that
12 come September you will be changing schools, but your
13 friends will not be going with you. You will have to
14 start all over in any sports, clubs, or anything else you
15 may have joined, and you will be making all new friends,
16 but don't worry, you'll see each other again when you

get

17 to high school. Let us know their reaction, because it's
18 easy for you to make decisions when it is not your
19 children being affected. You might get a different
20 perspective on this when you get their answers. Thank
21 you for your time.

22 MRS. MACBETH: After you're done speaking,
23 if you could please submit your written testimony, so we
24 can have that on record.

25 MR. BERBERIAN: Good evening. I have an

61

1 unusual name, so I will spell it for you. My first name

2 is Ara, A-R-A, my last is Berberian, B-E-R-B-E-R-I-A-N.

3 First, I would like to applaud all of the parents and

4 committee members that came this evening and, who like

5 me, gave up religious services because they feel so

6 strongly about the topic of this discussion. Personally,

7 and I would like the record to show that I don't need to

8 be here. I am one of the lucky parents that has one

9 child left in the middle school in the seventh grade,

10 going up to eighth, and according to the comments by

11 Dr. Morelle last week are guaranteed that those students

12 would be grandfathered, so I could have been one of
those

13 that sits home and not cares, because I shouldn't have a

14 care in the world, but I am concerned about the other
15 students and how it impacts them. I also have Sigma
16 training, and I realize when you bring together a task
17 force or a problem-solving committee, the committees
18 to start with a problem statement, although I heard
19 Dr. Morelle talk about what the task force was charged
20 with I'm still not quite sure what the problem statement
21 was that supports their charge. Through the process of
22 meeting, the end result is for a task force or a solution
23 committee to come up with, as their responsibility,
24 recommendations. Recommendations don't always have
25 mean change. Recommendations can be things can stay

have

to

the

1 way they are because based on our input, and based on
our

2 study there is no need for change. What I have learned

3 over my 20-year career in the business world, and I'm

4 sure many of you here can attest to that is sometimes

5 folks on task forces or change improvement committees

6 feel the need to present change in order to substantiate

7 the work that they have done, and that's not necessarily

8 the case. So I ask you, the committee, to remember that.

9 Their responsibility was to make a recommendation to
you,

10 not necessarily recommend change to you. Thank you
very

11 much.

12 (APPLAUSE)

13 MRS. MACBETH: Thank you.

14 MS. DRAPEAUX: Hi, I'm Tammy Drapeaux, and I

15 live on 19 Doire Road. I just wanted to take a moment

16 when we're talking about Plan C to point out that before

17 Dennis spoke it was talked about as a perfect solution.

18 It was in place for our current seventh graders last year

19 in sixth grade, and not necessarily so perfect. What I

20 wanted to let everybody know, that as far as numbers
go,

21 as far as the bussing goes, the children on our street

22 who go to North have about a 20-minute bus ride. My
son
23 at McCourt last year had a 50-minute bus ride, which
also
24 included the bus stopped at Ashton, and the students
25 needed to change the bus. I also didn't really have to

63

1 be here tonight. I do have a daughter coming up, but my
2 son is currently in private school. He's not affected
3 this year, but it's my understanding that they are still
4 changing busses at Ashton elementary. So, these
students
5 do have a much longer schoolday when we look at when

6 their morning starts and when their day ends. Thank
you.

7 MRS. MACBETH: Thank you. Is there anybody
8 here that would like to speak?

9 MS. MCCARTHY: I think this might be save
10 the best for last. My name is Karen McCarthy. I live at
11 11 Buckboard Drive. First, I'd like to take a moment to
12 thank the school committee and the Space Utilization
13 Committee for their time and effort. I believe we all
14 are here for the same purpose. The purpose is to make
15 the Cumberland schools a better place for our kids,
16 because it is all about the kids. Secondly, I would like
17 to thank my neighbors for all of their research, hard
18 work, and expert and factual testimony, certainly a job

19 well done.

20 Next, an issue that I would like to discuss that is
21 very important to me and should be important to every
22 person in this room, that is the parent connect. My
23 oldest daughter, Jennifer, is a fifth grader at the
24 Community School. I have spent several years getting to
25 know my daughter's friend's parents. I know all of their

64

1 values, beliefs, where they work, their home phone
2 number, their cell phone number, their e-mail address, I
3 have the utmost confidence in them making the right

4 choices and decisions when my daughter is at their
home.

5 After all, it is my responsibility as a parent to insure
6 that my children have healthy and safe peer
7 relationships. If my daughter is one of the small
8 percentage of children that is displaced to McCourt
9 Middle School, her social growth would be negatively
10 impacted. The reason I make this statement is because
my
11 daughter will not be allowed to go to a new classmate's
12 home on a Friday or Saturday evening until I, the parent,
13 get to know these parents and build a mutually trusting
14 relationship. Studies have shown that these negative
15 social implications have directly affected the child's

16 **academic growth.**

17 **In closing, I'm asking that you please do not leave**
18 **our 15 children behind their classmates. Leaving them**
19 **behind would adversely affect their academic growth as**
20 **well as their social well-being. And please remember, as**
21 **I mentioned before, this is about the kids, and not one**
22 **should be left behind. It should be a hundred percent of**
23 **the kids, a hundred percent of the time. Thank you.**

24 **MRS. MACBETH: Thank you. Go ahead.**

25 **MS. ALMEIDA: Hi. Deborah Almeida.**

1 **MRS. MACBETH: Can you make sure the**

2 microphone is on, so we can hear you, please.

3 MS. ALMEIDA: That better?

4 MR. ROTELLA: You need to pull it close to
5 you so you can talk. Take it right off the stand.

6 MS. ALMEIDA: That better? Thank you. I

7 just want to, my name is Deborah Almeida. I live at

8 Cider Court. I'm talking as a concerned grandparent. I

9 have heard a lot of these parents talk tonight, and I'm

10 talking from experience, too, that I just want to be

11 certain that everyone is addressing the psychological

12 effect this has on these children. I have worked as a

13 school nurse. I have worked at the junior high school

14 level, and I have also spent the last 25 years of my

15 career working in psychiatric nursing, and there is a lot
16 to be said about the theory of school connectedness,
and
17 I could provide you with, you know, several sources in
18 the literature that, and most of that is coming from the
19 school, the Journal of School Health. It says school
20 connectedness has been defined in different ways, but
21 common indicators include liking school, a sense of
22 belonging at school, positive relations with teachers and
23 friends at school, and active engagement in school
24 activities. A growing literature shows that school
25 connectedness predicts a variety of health outcomes.

1 Students who feel well connected to school report higher
2 levels of emotional well being, less substance abuse,
3 better health, decreased levels of suicidal ideation, and
4 trust me, we see that, we see seven, and eight, and nine
5 years old coming in and being suicidal, as well as
6 decreased depressive symptoms, a decreased risk of
7 violent and deviant behavior, and teen pregnancy, and I
8 just want, you know, if anyone wants any of these
9 sources, I'd be glad to share them with you, but I do see
10 the result of children that do not do well in life are
11 usually the children that have not succeeded well in
12 school, and I think we need to look at the whole impact,

13 not just financial or the space, I think everything has
14 to be looked at when we're discussing a child's future.

15 Thank you.

16 (APPLAUSE)

17 MRS. MACBETH: Thank you. Is there anybody

18 else that would like to speak? Anybody else that would

19 like to speak? Okay. Before we adjourn --

20 MR. WAGNER: You have got to close the

21 public session.

22 MR. THIBODEAU: Close the public session.

23 MRS. MACBETH: Before we do, I just wanted

24 to make just a couple of comments overall that I wanted

25 to say that sitting up here it's wonderful to see that we

1 have a community, the parents, the committee members,
and
2 the administration all agreeing that the schools where
3 our students attend are wonderful, that they're getting a
4 good education, that we're very happy with the teachers
5 no matter where they are in town, everybody that spoke, I
6 wanted to mention that, and I just wanted to thank both
7 the task force for the information and not only just
8 providing us with one plan but providing us with two
9 plans, whether we agree with them or not, but it is still
10 information, and then also to thank all of the community

11 members that have come here, have telephoned us, have
12 e-mailed us, because the more information that we have
13 helps us to make what we feel is the best decision for
14 all of our children, so I want to say thank you to all of
15 you for that. You know the children. You know your
16 addresses. You put a face in the information to the
17 numbers that we're presented with, so thank you.

18 (APPLAUSE)

19 MRS. MACBETH: Also, before we close, we
20 also met --

21 MR. COSTA: We need a motion to take --

22 MR. THIBODEAU: Motion to close the public
23 hearing.

24 **MRS. MACBETH:** We don't need a motion to
25 **close.**

68

1 **MR. ROTELLA:** You need a motion to take the
2 **bills out of order.**

3 **MRS. MACBETH:** May I have a motion to take
4 **the bills out of order, and then I'll make a motion of**
5 **where you would like them, please. Mr. Costa.**

6 **MR. COSTA:** You don't have to close it.

7 **(OFF THE RECORD DISCUSSION)**

8 **MR. COSTA:** I would like to make a motion

9 that we take payment of the bills out of order.

10 MR. THIBODEAU: Second.

11 MRS. MACBETH: All those in favor?

12 (AYE)

13 MRS. MACBETH: Opposed? Hearing none. May

14 I have a motion? Mr. Wagner, would you like to report

15 out from our financial subcommittee meeting?

16 MR. WAGNER: Yes, we met. Excuse me, we met

17 earlier this evening to discuss payment of some bills.

18 First ones we did were items that were labeled
textbooks.

19 There was a total of \$5,733.62. There was also a bill

20 for the RIASC \$6,795, and there was also invoices for

21 Cassel for legal fees, and that amount was, and that was

22 two separate invoices for \$6,795, oh, I'm sorry,
23 \$5,742.64, excuse me, and we need to take those
24 separately.

25 MRS. MACBETH: Okay. Let's begin with the

69

1 association for school committees. Do I have a motion
2 to --

3 MR. WAGNER: I'd like to get a motion to get
4 that paid, please. I will make that motion.

5 MR. THIBODEAU: I will second it.

6 MRS. MACBETH: Discussion? Mr. Wood.

7 **MR. WOOD:** Yes, I know this item was not
8 budgeted, and I would like to know where it is coming
9 from out of our budget.

10 **MR. WAGNER:** It's been identified in there
11 as money available. The special-ed director was not
12 hired until the 26th of October. There was some savings
13 in the budget there, and as of now that would be where I
14 propose to take it out of, and I would also like to point
15 out, Mr. Wood, that we will be reviewing at our next
16 meeting some adjustments to the budget with regards to
17 moving around, that's not a good way to put it,
18 reallocation of resources based on budget versus actual
19 numbers where we have some overages versus some

20 underages, and we are going to try to do that on the
21 budget. This would be one of those items.

22 MR. WOOD: You said it is coming out of the
23 salary.

24 MR. WAGNER: Yes.

25 MRS. MACBETH: Any other questions from the

70

1 committee? Okay. Roll call vote, Mr. Thibodeau.

2 MR. THIBODEAU: Yes.

3 MRS. MACBETH: Mr. Wagner.

4 MR. WAGNER: Yes.

5 MRS. MACBETH: Mr. Costa.

6 MR. COSTA: Yes.

7 MRS. MACBETH: Ms. Beauleiu.

8 MS. BEAULEIU: Yes.

9 MRS. MACBETH: Mr. Wood.

10 MR. WOOD: No.

11 MRS. MACBETH: And the chair votes yes.

12 Okay. Next on the agenda would be payment of the bills
13 for the textbooks.

14 MR. WAGNER: For the textbooks total of

15 \$5,732.62, I would like to make a motion to pay those.

16 MR. THIBODEAU: Second.

17 MRS. MACBETH: Discussion? Mr. Wood, go
18 ahead.

19 MR. WOOD: Can we get a breakdown of where
20 these textbooks are? Was that the CD you gave me the
21 other night?

22 MR. WAGNER: No, that CD from the other
23 night was an inventory of the textbooks as they exist
now
24 in the system. These were items that were purchased
over
25 the last two months or so at the various schools, and

71

1 there was some questions as to what was being
purchased

2 and whether or not they belonged in the textbook line or

3 should they belong under some form of school supplies.

4 **MR. WOOD:** Since we are on the subject of

5 textbooks, there has been a, I know the prior committee

6 or even this committee voted to have some English
books

7 purchased, and I don't remember seeing them yet. Can
we

8 look to find out if those have been purchased, Mr.

9 Wagner?

10 **MR. WAGNER:** Absolutely, Mr. Wood.

11 **MRS. MACBETH:** Any more discussion? Okay.

12 I would like to state that at our last finance

13 subcommittee meeting I was the one that asked to have

14 this item tabled because I did have questions on what

was

15 going into this line item, and at this point we brought
16 it back for this meeting, and I'm still going to wait for
17 those answers which I hope I get at the next finance
18 meeting. So roll-call vote, Mr. Thibodeau.

19 MR. THIBODEAU: Yes.

20 MRS. MACBETH: Mr. Wagner.

21 MR. WAGNER: Yes.

22 MRS. MACBETH: Mr. Costa.

23 MR. COSTA: Yes.

24 MRS. MACBETH: Ms. Beauleiu.

25 MS. BEAULEIU: Yes.

1 MRS. MACBETH: Mr. Wood.

2 MR. WOOD: Yes.

3 MRS. MACBETH: And the chair votes no.

4 Okay, the next bill is for the legal fees.

5 Mr. Wagner.

6 MR. WAGNER: For Mr. Cassel and his group.

7 There is two separate invoices, one of twenty-eight

8 hundred and fifty dollars, the other one is forty-five

9 hundred and fifty dollars for a total of seventy-four

10 hundred dollars. I would like to make a motion myself to

11 go ahead and pay those please.

12 MR. THIBODEAU: Second.

13 **MRS. MACBETH: Discussion? Mr. Wood.**

14 **MR. WOOD: Again, I know this line item is**

15 **overspent, and where is this money coming from.**

16 **MR. WAGNER: I believe we now are going to**

17 **be going the same place for this, Mr. Wood, but there are**

18 **several items that will be adjusted, and actually, I'll**

19 **discuss that with you when we're done.**

20 **MR. WOOD: Okay.**

21 **MRS. MACBETH: Any other discussion? Okay.**

22 **Again, this was an item that I asked to have tabled last**

23 **time, and my concern that I brought up at the finance**

24 **subcommittee meeting is how we go about hiring**
outside

25 legal services when it is necessary, and whether that

73

1 goes through approval of the school committee or
whether

2 it does or doesn't need school committee approval, and I

3 think that is something that as a committee we need to

4 definitely look into and make sure it goes into our

5 regulations much more clearly. So, anymore discussion?

6 MR. WAGNER: I wouldn't disagree with you, I

7 think at this moment in time it is somewhat unclear as to

8 what we should be doing, so I agree we probably should
be

9 looking at that in the future, so it's crystal clear as

10 to what process should be followed.

11 MRS. MACBETH: Thank you, and then also the

12 other point brought up is whether we are involved in

13 litigation or potential litigation where we outside legal

14 services, that the school committee be kept up to date

on

15 what's going on with these.

16 MR. WAGNER: That would be the part of the

17 process.

18 MRS. MACBETH: Thank you. Mr. Wood.

19 MR. WOOD: I have one question. David, I

20 know when we originally hired Mr. Cassel, we hired him

21 under a --

22 **THE REPORTER:** I'm sorry, Mr. Wood, I didn't

23 hear you.

24 **MR. WOOD:** We hired Mr. Cassel at the

25 beginning we said we were going to pay him \$200 an
hour,

74

1 is that still the fee?

2 **MR. WAGNER:** I believe that is still the

3 fee, yes.

4 **MR. WOOD:** Thank you.

5 **MRS. MACBETH:** Roll-call vote, Mr.

6 Thibodeau.

7 **MR. THIBODEAU: Yes.**

8 **MRS. MACBETH: Mr. Wagner.**

9 **MR. WAGNER: Yes.**

10 **MRS. MACBETH: Mr. Costa.**

11 **MR. COSTA: Yes.**

12 **MRS. MACBETH: Ms. Beauleiu.**

13 **MS. BEAULEIU: Yes.**

14 **MRS. MACBETH: Mr. Wood.**

15 **MR. WOOD: No.**

16 **MRS. MACBETH: And the chair votes no.**

17 **Okay. At this point we need a motion to adjourn.**

18 **MR. COSTA: Wait, I have a question.**

19 **Mr. Wagner, you mentioned--**

20 MR. WAGNER: Yes, Mr. Costa.

21 MR. COSTA: You mentioned about some

22 balanced transfers.

23 MR. WAGNER: Yes, sir.

24 MR. COSTA: Are we expecting those balanced

25 transfers in our packet, I would assume Monday because

75

1 tomorrow is a holiday.

2 MR. WAGNER: Those are, those balanced

3 transfers are slated to be discussed at the next finance

4 subcommittee meeting, and I would like to be able to

5 review them with you at that time.

6 **MR. COSTA:** Okay.

7 **MR. WAGNER:** So that was one of the things I

8 was going to go over. I would like to invite the whole

9 committee to the finance subcommittee meeting, so we
can

10 review those, if at all possible, next week. If anybody

11 is not available we certainly can talk about them during

12 the general meeting, but I would like to try and get this

13 as unanimous as we can.

14 **MRS. MACBETH:** Thank you. Mr. Costa, any

15 more questions?

16 **MR. COSTA:** No, all set.

17 **MS. DUNCAN:** May I just ask a final

18 question, please? What is the next step in the process
19 for decision around the space utilization? Is there
20 another meeting, and when is it getting voted on?

21 MRS. MACBETH: The committee had discussed
22 last time, if necessary, there could possibly be one more
23 meeting such as the one we had tonight, and that's still
24 open to see if we need that. If not, then it comes to
25 the committee, and that's where the discussion of the

76

1 committee begins, and we have all of the information
2 that's been put -- Mr. Costa.

3 MR. COSTA: Donna, to answer that question,

4 we still have not received, and I have been told this
5 evening, that we will be receiving the transcript from
6 the last meeting sometime the beginning of next week, in
7 which turn, then we'll wait for the transcripts of this
8 meeting to make sure all the accuracies are in it and
9 make sure we got all our facts and figures, and if need
10 be, I would recommend that we would have a third
meeting.

11 Until we see all of the transcripts and all of the
12 testimony, and all of the documents that are associated
13 with this, I think it's best to wait. At this point it

14 doesn't make any sense to make a hasty decision. I
hope

15 this committee makes a decision within a month or so,

but

16 at this point I would recommend that, you know, we wait
17 until we have all of the transcripts and the testimony,
18 so we can review it, and then if need be, if we, as a
19 committee, still have some questions or doubts, then we
20 as a committee can say I think it would be best to have
21 another meeting to make sure that, you know, all of the
22 testimony is accurate. So, that's where I would like to
23 go.

24 MRS. MACBETH: Mr. Wagner.

25 MR. WAGNER: I would like to follow up with

1 that. I think the other thing, too, is we were
2 discussing earlier, we've already talked about getting
3 back together to have a situation where we would
actually
4 be asking some questions and getting some answers
5 directly as opposed to just taking some testimony. Mr.
6 Costa makes an excellent point. We need to be able to
7 review all of the testimony before we are prepared to go
8 ahead and ask some questions but I, there is no way I
can
9 see anybody being prepared to vote on this until we have
10 at least one more meeting.

11 **MRS. MACBETH:** Thank you.

12 **MR. COSTA:** I make a motion to adjourn.

13 MR. WAGNER: Second.

14 MR. THIBODEAU: Second.

15 THE COURT: All those in favor?

16 (AYE)

17 (MATTER ADJOURNED AT 9:30 P.M.)

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

1

2

3

C E R T I F I C A T E

4

5

6

**I, Tracy L. Shepherd, do hereby certify
that the foregoing is a true, accurate, and complete
transcript of my notes taken at the above-entitled
hearing.**

8

9

**IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I hereunto set my hand
this 7th day of April 2008.**

10

11

12

13

14

TRACY SHEPHERD, RPR, NOTARY PUBLIC
MY COMMISSION EXPIRES 8/26/09

16

17

18

19

DATE: March 20, 2008

20

IN RE: Public Hearing

21

HEARING OF: Cumberland School Committee

22

23

24

25